



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE MEXICAN SITUATION

BY HENRY CLEWS, PH.D., LL.D.,

New York.

The situation in Mexico at the moment is about as bad as it could be, and unless some outside influence is brought to bear, I can see no chance of immediate improvement.

The recent murders of an Englishman and an American have stirred the blood of all who speak our common language. Fortunately for us, England has kept her hands off, leaving it to us to see that the factions in Mexico atone for their crimes.

Were it not for the Monroe Doctrine, it is more than likely that several foreign powers would have landed marines in parts of Mexico, for the reason that citizens of their countries were being deprived of their business rights, and had suffered large money losses on account of the chaotic state of affairs. If these countries once made a landing it might be a long time before they withdrew, if ever, as they are hungry for a portion of the territory of this hemisphere, and now would be their opportunity for acquiring it.

President Wilson, in his policy of non-intervention, is trying an experiment which we all hope will prove a success, for no one wishes to see bloodshed, or money lost, by settling quarrels between the citizens of our near neighbors. With England approving of our waiting policy, other nations are lookers-on, and for the time being are willing to wait for the tide to turn when they can seek reparation for money losses.

The future of Mexico is inextricably bound up in social, political and economic problems of the most complex character.

Socially, the conditions in Mexico are such as to make successful government almost impossible at this time. The great mass of her population is a mixed race of Spanish and Indian blood raised but a step above the savage state. The people are uneducated and grossly ignorant, highly excitable, and given to spasmodic outbursts of passion, outlawry and violence. To have ever given such a population the vote before it was able to exercise an approximately decent use of it was a blunder of the most grievous sort. Mexicans not only

have no conception of how to use the ballot, but their inability to comprehend its inestimable privileges converts them unconsciously into tools of crafty and unscrupulous leaders who brutalize the voters and exploit them for purely selfish and personal ends. There is probably no more ignorant voter in the world than the Mexican. Our own colored people are infinitely better citizens and better voters than the Mexican peon. The ballot in that anarchy-ridden country is not merely a farce, but a curse, inasmuch as it perverts every branch of the government and only serves to strengthen the grip of an oppressive and greedy aristocracy upon the entire population.

Politically, the present system of government in Mexico is an absolute misfit. Her constitution is modeled after that of the United States—a nation that has in its blood the traditions, principles and habits of generations of self-government behind it. It is self-evident that what fits the United States cannot fit Mexico where racial conditions and traditions are so entirely different. Successful self-government in Mexico can only come through many years of gradual change in the public character by means of experience, education and the influx of a better population.

What Mexico primarily needs for the time being is a strong central government. Perhaps an intelligent and just despotism would best fit the present situation in Mexico. But can such be found? Does Mexico produce men of the necessary type? Can Mexico turn out a Lord Cromer of Egyptian fame, or a Colonel Goethals of Panama, or a Taft of the Philippines? If the destinies of Mexico could be controlled for a few years by men of this type, she might be educated gradually to take care of herself. The most successful government Mexico ever had, in spite of its gross abuses, was a despotism; but that government was notoriously corrupt. Its members grew enormously rich, and the people were taxed to death in order to support a political machine which simply crushed the taxpayer, and kept him in practical slavery. Human nature was bound to revolt against such oppression.

My suggestion is to bring Huerta and Carranza together and see if they cannot agree on a provisional president to be appointed or elected, and that suitable recognition in some official capacity be given to each of these leaders. Both must realize, though neither will admit it, that if the present struggle keeps up both must lose, as intervention will mean ruin to them. No lasting peace can be

secured unless it guarantees protection to the lives and property of all foreign residents, and metes justice to the people of Mexico of all grades and conditions.

Economically, Mexico is entirely dependent upon foreign capital. It is estimated that there are about five thousand millions of dollars of foreign investments in Mexico, a considerable portion of which belongs to the United States. Her railroads, her mines, her oil wells and her banks are all chiefly owned and controlled abroad. The Mexican people work largely for non-resident owners and masters. This, of itself, creates fatally weak economic and social relations, for there is no doubt that Mexico would be much better off if a larger proportion of these owners lived and spent their money in Mexico, and exerted their steady influence upon political affairs.

There is still one more economic and social weakness of far-reaching importance, and that is this, the great bulk of the land in Mexico is owned by a few wealthy families who have grown rich by extracting from the natives all they possibly can. There are practically no small land owners in Mexico, and there is no peasant class, which, if it existed, would be an element of stability and result in a more equitable distribution of the national wealth. No domestic peace can be expected in Mexico until the present unwholesome land system is broken up. Mexico is suffering from a state of practical slavery against which human nature is bound to rebel. To a savage the life of brigandage is vastly more interesting and attractive than any orderly self-government could be.

What Mexico should have is, first, a strong, wise and unselfish government, with more or less autocratic powers.

Second, a change of laws which would give opportunities to small land owners; and third, the encouragement of a better class of immigration—all with the purpose of keeping a large share of the nation's profits at home. Finally, above all, Mexico needs men—strong men, men of high and unselfish purpose, men of great executive ability who will consecrate themselves to the upbuilding of Mexico on the lines of justice and sound economic development. Mexico has a brighter future than is supposed even under the present clouds of revolution. When the e pass away, as they ultimately will, there will spring up a new and better Mexico. There is a grand opportunity for a statesman of constructive genius. This is far and away the first and greatest need of Mexico. Can she produce such? If

not, can she find one elsewhere, and if not, what will happen? Nobody can predict the consequences of the present protracted state of anarchy, except that it must end, and if not by inside force, then by outside force.

I am a most earnest advocate of peace by arbitration, and it would be a grand day for humanity if the Mexican troubles could be settled in that way as it would mean the dawn of a new era. Many of the leading lights in Mexico are yearning for peace and saying to both Huerta and Carranza, in the words of Shakespeare, "A plague on both your houses!" In our own country the right man has been found in every great crisis. Let us hope and pray that a Moses may arise in Mexico who will be able to lead his countrymen in the path of peace with honor to all who deserve honor.